



ZenQuest Martial Arts Center

55 Pittsfield Road-Building 10, Lenox, MA 01240

(413) 637-0656 * zenquestmac@sprynet.com * www.zenquestmac.com

An Okinawa Karatedo Association, Demian Mata Jiu-jitsu Network and Siyodtong Boston Affiliate

NEWSLETTER June 2023

The Survivors

In March of 2020 we were all hit with a global pandemic. Lockdowns were imposed, economies were shut down, and travel was brought to a grinding halt. Despite this over 767 million people would eventually be infected and over 6.9 million have now died from COVID19 throughout the world. The CDC also reports that about 40% of adults in the U.S. have had COVID19, and nearly 1-in-5 of those report lingering health concerns or 'long COVID.'

In the post pandemic world many people struggle with a variety of impacts from the COVID19 situation. Aside from the physical effects from 'long haul' damage, others have persistent mental or emotional complications. In a 2021 study performed by the NIH nearly half of Americans reported symptoms of mental disorders increasing since the pandemic. These can include anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and a general feeling of hopelessness.

Experts say that this is caused by a combination of factors including isolation, high levels of stress, loss of control, lost jobs, domestic distress, lost savings, and even lost loved ones. On top of that, the threat of getting sick or even dying from the disease itself was a tremendous strain for many people. This is further complicated by a lack of activity, unhealthy eating habits, and excessive Screen time.

When nearly ALL the people in the world have suffered through a crisis like this there can be difficulties in getting back to normal due to the collective damage that has been done. Even after the pandemic has been declared over there is a 'silent epidemic' of mental illness that affects millions of people worldwide to varying degrees. An unhealthy culture can linger with so many people recovering from different emotional challenges. One of these is called Agoraphobia, or an irrational fear of being in crowded places or even leaving the home. Another is called Social Anxiety Disorder, or the fear of being watched or judged by other people. A 'victim' mentality may also affect people, where they feel that the world is against them. When these all become woven into our population they can persist for a long time without some healthy perspective and efforts to regain normalcy in our lives.



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Spring Cleaning

Prior to the pandemic ZenQuest held an annual spring cleaning day to give the dojo a good cleaning and some basic maintenance, too. This started out as something that Senseis Connie and Mark would do, but others joined in at some point and it became a 'thing.' Last year we resumed the tradition and we will hold the 2023 Spring Cleaning on Sunday, June 25. Technically that will make it early summer cleaning, but whatever.

This year will mostly be dusting and cleaning as usual, with some paint touch-up and installation of new lights in the front training room. If enough people show up to help there is also some work to be done on the outside of the building.

The start time for this will be 10 AM and is expected to go for two to three hours. Morning treats will be available for the participants, and a lunch at the new restaurant 'Antimony' is planned at the conclusion of the event. So, please join us!



Playground Repairs

The playground in the picnic area next to ZenQuest has provided a place for students and family members to enjoy since the gym opened in late 2010. However, after almost 13 years of use it is beginning to show some wear and tear that requires some attention. So, over the next several weeks portions of the playground will be replaced. At the time of this newsletter a new ladder has already been installed. In addition a new climbing wall will be added, and the bridge between the slides will also be replaced.

We ask that students and parents be patient while these improvements are made, and understand that the playground may need to be closed for a short time in the process. As always we appreciate your understanding and cooperation. Lastly, please report any problems encountered with the area as soon as its convenient.



AC News

On Saturday, May 20th we hosted Advanced Concepts in Muay Thai. This clinic began with Kru Connie and Mark thanking the assistant instructors for doing a great job with consistency in teaching, and positive interactions with the students. From there the group dove into some training, focusing on speed and power in striking, while staying mindful of the technical aspects of their movements. The group practiced being more relaxed or 'sabai' so that they can generate more power.

At the end of the training several promotions were awarded including: Kelsey Koldys & Kathy Petrucci for earning their blue prajiet, Glen Giumarra for earning his 2nd stripe on his blue prajiet, Carlo Petrucci for earning his 3rd stripe on his blue prajiet, Jennifer Somerville for earning her 1st stripe on her purple prajiet, and Chis Kupernik for earning his 1st stripe on his brown prajiet. Congrats to all!

Watch for our next round of Advanced Concepts clinics in at the end of the summer season.



IMPORTANT DATES

Mon, 6/19 - NO CLASSES
 Sat, 6/24 - NAGA Springfield
 Sun, 6/25, 10:00a - Dojo Clean-up Day!!
 Mon, 7/3 & Tues, 7/4 - NO CLASSES
 Sun, 7/23, 1:30p - Possible Kyu Test
 Sat, 7/29, 1:15p - AC Jiu-Jitsu
 Sat, 9/23, 1:15p - AC Uechi
 Sat, 9/30, 1:15p - AC Muay Thai

NEW STUDENTS!

Welcome: Oliver Cookson, Sophia Perreault
 Abigail Wells, Joshua Casella, Luna Hernandez,
 Colton Wright, Addison Pleu, Luca Ismail, Amelie
 Ismail

Welcome Back: Dennis McCarthy, Lali
 Hernandez, Andrey Norrin & Matt Hill

RECENT PROMOTIONS**TIGERS:**

8kyu - Theo Susse, Abby Havill
 9kyu - Silas Cunningham, Oscar Southard,
 Sid Sonis, Brody White, Landon
 Sheilds

DRAGONS:

7kyu - James Mercier
 8kyu - Isabella Yeaman

PYTHONS:

1 stripe grey - Jordyn Simmons
 2 stripe grey/white - Troy Middleton,
 Gustavo Perez
 3 stripe white - Easton Tatro, Max Polastri,
 River DiVecchio
 2 stripe white - Betsy Russo

MUAY THAI:

1 stripe brown - Chris Kupernik
 1 stripe purple - Jenn Somerville
 Purple - Matt Moreau
 3 stripe blue - Carlo Petrucci
 2 stripe blue - Glenn Giumarra
 Blue - Kelsey Koldys, Kathy Petrucci
 1 stripe white - Borey Booker, Levi
 Giumarra, Chalice Mitchell
 White - Robert Inesta, Max Cusak, Kyle
 Flahardy

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Matt Hill 6/3
 Michael Wynn 6/6
 Maggie Williams 6/6
 Clayton Correia 6/6
 Hunter Hamilton 6/7
 Carter Waldron 6/9
 Brian Henault 6/10
 Dessa Boinay 6/11
 Ari Williams 6/16
 Andre Gusmao 6/21
 Cael Swan 6/23
 Katya Bowen 6/24
 Andrey Norin 6/24
 Sean Callahan 6/25
 Theodore Didio 6/27
 Penelope Chavez-Norbury 6/27
 Benjamine Chagnon 6/30

Terminology**Safety**

Japanese: Anzen-sei
 Brazilian: Segurança
 Thai: Kwam Plodtai

**“Best Martial Arts Academy”
 ZenQuest Martial Arts**

Berkshire Eagle's
 Readers Choice Awards
**SIX YEARS
 RUNNING!**



(Continued from page 1) *The Survivors*

This can affect every age group among us, either directly or indirectly. However, studies show that teens and preteens have been most affected by all of this. The pandemic hit as teens and preteens were entering a time when many critical life and social skills were developing. Being thrown into all the complications that came with the pandemic has resulted in difficulty, delay, and confusion in some of these critical skills for them.

One way to gain some better perspective on all of this is to realize that we are the **survivors**. Although we have been inconvenienced, damaged or even broken by the pandemic, but we have made it through. We've weathered the storm and survived it. Focusing on our losses and hardships of our past will rob us of our success and happiness going forward. There comes a time when it is best to put the past behind us and move on. We will do well to start living in the moment and planning for the future.

Now, most people are aware of PTSD or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, an affliction that affects millions of people around the world. It is where people have difficulty recovering from hardships and trauma from their past, sometimes to the extreme. However, there is another condition that survivors of stress and trauma can develop that is called 'Adversarial Growth.' This is becoming highly motivated and driven to succeed or even thrive DESPITE the losses and hardships that we've had to endure. This is a powerful survival instinct that we must tap into if possible. We need to realize that the quality of our lives depend on our ability to get motivated and improve things for ourselves. The German philosopher Fredrich Nietzsche said it best with 'What doesn't kill me makes me stronger.'



Those of us dealing with lost loved ones should realize that, although they are gone, they would probably not want us to flounder and suffer without them. They would most likely want us to be successful and happy for the rest of our lives. We should think in terms of making them proud and honoring them in that way.

Those of us who continue to struggle and cannot seem to rise up out of the ashes in the post pandemic world should seek the help of mental wellness professionals. There are now in-person and telehealth options available for mental wellness services. The old-school stigma of negativity surrounding this type of help is nonsense and should not interfere with us getting to a better place in our lives. As with any other medical problem, seeing a qualified professional for the remedy is the move.

Lastly, martial arts training is an amazing way to work our way into a better headspace post pandemic. Experts agree that physical activity and getting into better shape helps us function and feel better in our day to day lives. Many of the activities in the martial arts have a therapeutic value to them which allows us to vent our frustrations and stress. All of the arts at ZenQuest put an emphasis on mindful movement which improves our 'mind-body' connection over time. We also will gain stronger willpower and better self-control which can lead to healthier lifestyle habits.

Unlike many other fitness options, martial arts training by its nature also has social elements to it. ZenQuest prides itself on providing a friendly environment that welcomes people from all walks of life. Many of the activities involve working with partners which can lead to lasting friendships. In fact, the Okinawans have a term '*Butomo*' or '*Buji*' meaning war-friend or war-blood. This is a reference to lifelong friendships developed through training in the martial arts together.

What could be better to help us through a difficult time than having some good friends that we can talk to?